

Chapter 5a: Introduction

Introduction

The Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) and the Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) provide an overall path to reducing air pollution in the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) community. Through the development of the CERP and CAMP, the Community Steering Committee (CSC) identified air quality priorities based on sources of air pollution that are of concern to the community (e.g., Salton Sea, potentially toxic dust, open burning). To reduce air pollution from these sources, the CSC identified a set of actions for inclusion in the CERP to be implemented by government agencies, organizations, businesses and other entities.

The CSC identified the Salton Sea, pesticides, open burning and illegal dumping, fugitive road dust, diesel mobile sources, and the Greenleaf Desert View Power Plant (formerly Colmac Energy, Inc.) as air quality priorities to address in the CERP and CAMP. These air pollution sources are often near homes, schools, and other community areas where the public can be exposed to harmful pollutants. Therefore, additional air monitoring in the community to inform emissions and exposure reduction measures is also important to the CSC.

Ongoing Efforts

The South Coast AQMD, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and Tribal EPA has air quality regulations to reduce air pollution from sources such as trucks, diesel farm equipment, open burning, fugitive road dust and electricity-generating facilities such as the Greenleaf Desert View Power Plant. As part of ongoing efforts, staff continues to explore and identify additional funding opportunities to reduce emissions in AB 617 communities. The relevant agencies also enforce these regulations. More information on air pollution related enforcement efforts is available in Chapter 4.

Opportunities for Action

In addition to the ongoing efforts described above, the CSC, in collaboration with South Coast AQMD staff, identified 15 goals to reduce air pollution in the ECV community. The CERP defines how progress toward each goal is assessed by including specified metrics and timelines for each action. Additionally, the CERP identifies the entities responsible for implementing the actions. Responsible entities include collaborating agencies that have jurisdictional authority and/or supporting entities to implement the actions. The actions define a path to reduce emissions and exposures in the ECV community. In some instances, the actions reaffirm ongoing rule development efforts and provide new commitments for localized reductions, sharing emissions data, new or accelerated timelines, and other related information.

Emission Reduction Targets

The actions in the CERP prioritize emissions reductions in the ECV community. The CERP includes emission reduction targets, where quantifiable, for oxides of nitrogen (NOx), diesel particulate matter (DPM), and particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller (PM2.5). Table 1 below, provides a list of the overall emission reduction targets for the CERP. ~~Additionally, the CERP is expected to reduce 2.4 tpy of particulate matter 10 microns or smaller (PM10) by 2030. Baseline emissions refer to expected future emissions without any new action or regulation beyond those already adopted.~~ Additionally, the CERP is expected to result in

additional emission reductions that have yet to be quantified (e.g., actions focused on enforcement and outreach).

Table 1 – CERP Emission Reduction Targets		
Emissions	NOx	DPM
2018 Emissions in tons per year (tpy))	1,376	24
Projected 2025 Baseline Emissions [†] (tpy)	982	11
Emission Reductions from CERP, by 2025 (tpy)	54	1
Overall Emission Reductions from 2025 (%)	33	58
Projected 2030 Baseline Emissions ^{††} (tpy)	878	8
Emission Reductions from CERP, by 2030 (tpy)*	115	2
Overall Emission Reductions from 2030 (%)	45	77

*Estimated emission reduction targets from CERP, by 2030 include 15.6 tpy NOx, 1.4 tpy DPM from projected incentive projects.

[†]Baseline emissions refer to expected future emissions without any new action or regulation beyond those already adopted.

Table 2 – Emission Reduction Targets for Statewide Measures*						
Statewide Measure	Action Date	Implementing Entity	Emission Reductions Targets 2025/2030 (tpy)			
			NOx	VOC	DPM	PM2.5
Advanced Clean Car 2	2020-2021	CARB	-/1.0	-/0.5	-/<0.1	-/<0.1
Heavy-Duty Inspection and Maintenance	2020	CARB	38.4/47.8	-/-	0.7/0.7	0.6/0.7
Low NOx Engine Standard	2019	CARB	2.7/22.3	-/-	-/-	-/-
Small Off-Road Engine Amendment	2020	CARB	13.2/28.0	12.3/56.5	0.1/0.4	0.2/1.4

*Emission reduction targets based on estimates from CARB. Emission reductions are subject to future assessment and regulatory analysis that may result in emission reduction adjustments.

CERP Amendment

During CERP Development, the ECV CSC expressed that more time was needed to fully develop a CERP that was effective, enforceable, and resulted in measurable reductions. On December 4, 2020, the South Coast AQMD Governing Board adopted the ECV CERP, including a resolution that committed staff to continue working with the CSC to develop a CERP Amendment that includes additional details requested by the CSC. Since the adoption of the ECV CERP, staff has met with the CSC on over 30 occasions. This includes 9 CSC meetings focused on the CERP Amendment and incentives budget, 12 Budget and Monitoring Working Teams and agenda setting meetings, and over 10 meetings with small groups or individual CSC members. The CSC meetings focused on developing CERP details for actions to address pesticides, land use, local and regional plans, and alternatives to agricultural burning. These topic areas for developing CERP amendments were specified by the CSC. The budgeting meetings and workshops gathered CSC input on allocation of the Year 3 Community Air Protection Program (CAPP) incentives funds (\$5.57 million) for community-identified projects in the ECV. The Budget Working Team and Monitoring Working Team meetings were organized and led by CSC Members and staff participated and provided presentations. CSC Members provided regular updates to the entire CSC on topics discussed during the Working Team meetings, which included identifying monitoring locations and discussing the incentives budget.

Incentives Budget Workshop

The ECV CSC requested to provide input on the allocation of available Year 3 CAPP incentive funds (\$5.57 million). Staff held 3 incentives budget workshops and provided the CSC information on eligible projects (e.g., estimated costs, emissions reductions, amount invested in previous CAPP funding cycle). Staff also conducted two polls to gather CSC input. The first poll identified the CSC's top 3 priorities by project type which are road paving, air filtration and purifier systems, and alternatives to agricultural burning. The second poll identified how the CSC would like to distribute the available funds to the top 3 priorities with \$4.57 million to road paving projects and \$1 million to home air filtration/purifier systems. Additionally, the ECV CSC established a Budget Working Team that met once every other week during development of the CERP Amendment to discuss the incentives budget, leveraging other available funds, eligible and desirable projects to potentially fund, and how to distribute the funds to each project.

South Coast AQMD will continue to work with the CSC on their budget priorities for incentive projects and hold incentives-specific workshops for interested members to develop project plans for community-identified projects. The workshops will facilitate additional CSC input on project plan criteria and other considerations for the disbursement of Year 3 CAPP incentive funds, including integrating the additional considerations that were raised during the public process thus far (e.g. focusing on funding home filtration and purifier systems at homes near the Salton Sea and occupied by children with asthma). These project plans are required by CARB, as outlined in their CAPP Incentive Guidelines¹.

Monitoring Working Team Workshops

During the development of the CERP Amendment, CSC members organized a Monitoring Working Team (MWT) and held a total of 4 workshops. CSC members led the discussion and staff participated in each of these workshops to answer questions that arose regarding the current monitoring efforts in the ECV,

¹ CAPP Incentives Guidelines: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/cap_incentives_2019_guidelines_final_rev_10_14_2020_0.pdf

available monitoring technologies, and the overall CAMP implementation. The MWT conducted a survey with the entire CSC to gather input on potential locations to install monitors and/or air quality sensors. Staff will continue working with the MWT to implement the actions in the CAMP, including supplementing the existing air monitoring network and establishing a new air quality sensor network, as well as providing regular updates to the CSC.

Land Use

Land use planning is the process of regulating or managing the use of land to consider factors (e.g., social, economic) to guide the development of a community and preserve its resources and quality of life. These decisions are generally made by city or county planning agencies. Zoning is used to help governments regulate the physical development of land and type of uses on these lands (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial). State law expressly prohibits South Coast AQMD from land use decisions. Although South Coast AQMD does not have land use jurisdiction, staff works with land use agencies through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires state and local agencies to identify and reduce the environmental impacts of land-use decisions. Through the CEQA process, staff has the opportunity to provide technical expertise and recommendations to mitigate air quality impacts. South Coast AQMD has a robust Intergovernmental Review (IGR) program, in which staff reviews and comments on hundreds of CEQA documents per year, focusing on adequacy of air quality analyses. South Coast AQMD CEQA comments are meant as guidance for lead agencies, including local land use agencies or entities, to ensure a reasonable air quality analysis is conducted to estimate air quality impacts, and significant air quality impacts are mitigated to the extent feasible. Local land use agencies often consult with South Coast AQMD staff during preparation of an environmental analysis and staff provides mitigation measures to ensure they are incorporated into projects early in the development process. Existing projects that are already developed, such as the Thermal Racing Club Track² and Thermal Airport, are difficult to change. However, South Coast AQMD recognizes it can take actions to reduce emissions for future development projects (e.g., race tracks, airports, warehouses) in the ECV through the CEQA process and provide the CSC updates on these types of projects. Additionally, the ECV CSC identified concerns around tailpipe emissions from vehicles at the Thermal Racing Club Track. Recognizing the cumulative impacts that the ECV community faces, additional actions were written into the CERP specific to certain air quality priorities such as working with CARB and land use agencies to develop recommendations on best practices to address light duty mobile sources from local land use (e.g., Thermal Racing Club Track) (see Table 3 below), providing additional air quality expertise for new development projects near the Salton Sea and pursuing collaboration with Riverside County, the City of Indio and the City of Coachella to identify, secure and implement greenspace projects near sensitive receptors near the Salton Sea (see Chapter 5b), identifying opportunities to collaborate with local land use and transportation agencies to restrict heavy-duty trucks from transiting near sensitive land uses (e.g., residences) and pursuing collaboration with land use agencies to implement vegetative barriers around the railroad that passes through the ECV community (Chapter 5f).

² California law exempts “racing vehicles” from emissions controls to protect and preserve legitimate racing - Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 43001. “Racing vehicle” is defined as “a competition vehicle not used on public highways - HSC § 39048.

Table 3 below provides a goal, action, responsible entity, applicable metrics and an implementation timeline to develop strategies to address land use, and local and regional plans.

Table 3 – Goal: Develop strategies with land use agencies to lessen cumulative impacts and reduce emissions and exposure

	Action	Responsible Entity	Metric	Timeline	
				Start	Complete
A	Present an overview of the South Coast AQMD CEQA-IGR program to the CSC and present recommended mitigation measures staff generally provides for new and redevelopment projects and provide the CSC with updates on CEQA-IGR projects South Coast AQMD has provided comments on	South Coast AQMD	Presentation on overview provided • Updates provided to CSC	First two quarters, 2021	1 st quarter, 2026
B	Review the community plans (e.g., Coachella Valley Extreme Ozone State Implementation Plan) and identify appropriate areas for coordination and collaboration with the lead agencies to help reduce emissions and/or exposures to the air pollution within the air quality priorities addressed in the CERP	South Coast AQMD	• Number of plans reviewed Areas identified for coordination	First two quarters, 2021	1 st quarter, 2026

Table 1 – Goal: Coordinate with Local and Regional Agencies to facilitate the implementation of community plans and develop strategies with land use agencies to lessen cumulative impacts and reduce emissions and exposures

	Action	Responsible Entity	Metric	Timeline	
				Start	Complete

A	<u>Present an overview of the South Coast AQMD CEQA – IGR program to the CSC and present recommended mitigation measures staff generally provides for new and redevelopment projects and provide the CSC with updates on CEQA-IGR projects where South Coast AQMD has provided comments</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Overview presentation provided</u> <u>Updates provided to CSC</u> 	<u>3rd quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
B	<u>Provide local and regional planning agencies an opportunity to conduct community outreach for plans that affect air quality in the community (e.g., announcements, presentations) through public comments in CSC meetings</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Number of outreach opportunities other agencies participated in</u> 	<u>1st quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
C	<u>Provide air quality information to inform the implementation of local and regional plans that affect air quality</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Number of air quality related comments provided to other agencies</u> 	<u>1st quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
D	<u>Identify appropriate tree planting locations near areas of concern (e.g., mobile home parks and schools) and seek opportunities to implement tree planting projects that support climate resilience and adaptation policies</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Locations identified</u> <u>Number of trees planted per year</u> <u>Updates to the CSC</u> 	<u>1st quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
E	<u>Incentivize mobile source projects (e.g., electric and hybrid vehicles) in ECV to reduce air toxics, criteria pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Number of mobile source projects funded</u> 	<u>1st quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
F	<u>Identify funds for home weatherization projects in ECV to support climate resilience and adaptation policies</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Number of home weatherization projects funded</u> 	<u>1st quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>

<u>G</u>	<u>Collaborate with the California Natural Resource Agency (CNRA), the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), and other partnering agencies to implement dust suppression projects identified in the Dust Suppression Action Plan (additional details available in Chapter 5b, Table 2, Action C)</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Number of comment letters provided to partnering agencies</u> • <u>Number of dust suppression projects implemented</u> 	<u>4th quarter, 2020</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>
<u>H</u>	<u>South Coast AQMD and CARB to work with the CSC to develop recommendations for land use agencies on best practices to reduce light duty vehicle emissions from the Thermal Racing Club Track</u>	<u>CARB and South Coast AQMD</u>	<u>TBD</u>	<u>4th quarter, 2021</u>	<u>1st quarter, 2026</u>